



State of Washington  
Department of Fish and Wildlife

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September 2, 2015

**WASHINGTON COASTAL DUNGENESS CRAB INDUSTRY NOTICE**

**Beginning September 7, 2015, permitted gear recovery will be allowed the coastal waters ONLY between the Washington/Oregon border (46°15.00) and Point Chehalis (46°53.18), including the Columbia River and Willapa Bay.**

WDFW is now issuing permits to coastal Dungeness crab license owners who are interested in recovering crab gear left in the ocean following the early closure of the 2014-2015 commercial crab season in the area between the WA/OR border and Point Chehalis, including the Columbia River and Willapa Bay.

**A PERMIT IS REQUIRED to participate in this program.**

- **Contact Carol Henry at 360-249-4628 ext. 254 to request a permit.**

The date when gear recovery will begin in other areas will be announced later.

Participants with a WDFW issued gear recovery permit will be able to recover crab gear owned by Washington state licensed fishers that remains in the ocean and will be exempt from lost and found property laws allowing them to keep any such gear they recover or, arrangements can be made to return the gear to the original owner. This permit does not allow the recovery of crab gear owned by tribal fishers.

In regards to final deposition of recovered gear, remember that it is always an option for those participating in the permitted gear recovery program to give the owner of any gear they recover the right of first refusal.

To allow for data collection and monitoring of the program, gear recovery permits will require:

- That the permit is on board the participating vessel anytime it is engaged in recovery operations or has recovered gear onboard.
- Notification to Department staff (by calling Sgt. Tony Leonetti at 360-485-8149) prior to the vessel leaving the dock and 2-hours prior to returning to the dock during recovery operations (regardless if any gear was recovered).
- Recording all recovered gear in a special log book specific to derelict gear recovery (this log book will be provided with your permit.)
- Registration, inspection and marking of all recovered gear prior to removing it from the participating vessel.

Since the closure of the commercial fishery on June 17, 2015, it has been illegal to have gear in the water between the Washington/Oregon border (46°15.00) and Point Chehalis (46°53.18), including the Columbia River and Willapa Bay. Any gear remaining in the water is available for recovery under the permitted gear removal program. Call Sgt. Tony Leonetti at 360-485-8149 if you need to request an exemption only for extreme conditions that you have not already addressed.

*In order to locate and recover as much abandoned crab gear as possible the Department has set up an abandoned gear reporting hotline for coastal areas. Any information on the specific location of crab pots that are not actively fishing will aid to the success of the permitted gear recovery project.*

**To report lost or abandoned crab gear call 360-249-4628 extension 263 and leave as much information as possible including, your name, phone number, general location, latitude and longitude and approximate amount of lost gear. Information on derelict crab gear can also be provided electronically by using the WDFW on line reporting form at the following link: [http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/derelict/derelict\\_gear.html](http://wdfw.wa.gov/fish/derelict/derelict_gear.html)**